

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Ford Heights Tire Fire - Removal Polrep  
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region V

**Subject:** POLREP #1  
Initial  
Ford Heights Tire Fire  
  
Ford Heights, IL  
Latitude: 41.5024391 Longitude: -87.5968197

**To:**  
**From:** Jaime Brown, OSC  
**Date:** 5/24/2016  
**Reporting Period:** 5/24/2016 - 5/25/2016

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

<b>Site Number:</b>	C5BS	<b>Contract Number:</b>	
<b>D.O. Number:</b>		<b>Action Memo Date:</b>	
<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b>	PRP	<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>	
<b>Mobilization Date:</b>	5/24/2016	<b>Start Date:</b>	5/24/2016
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>Completion Date:</b>	
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>		<b>RCRIS ID:</b>	
<b>ERNS No.:</b>		<b>State Notification:</b>	Illinois EPA
<b>FPN#:</b>		<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>	

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

The Site is a tire recycling operation owned/operated by two different entities. All American Recycling, Inc. GMI operates a recycling operation at the site and GMI Recycling operates a tire material storage facility. The piles of shredded tires which were involved in the fire are located at the GMI Recycling facility. The facility is surrounded by a financially distressed, predominantly low-income community.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

GMI Recycling Services (scrap tire collection operation) is located at 1703 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, Illinois 60411.

All American Recycling (tire shred storage and recycling operation) is located at 1705 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, Illinois 60411.

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

There are two primary threats from the incident. Contaminated run-off (containing oils from the burning tires) from firefighting operations threatens release to Deer Creek. Air emissions from the fire (smoke containing particulates and poly-aromatic hydrocarbons) threaten human health downwind of the site. Areas currently downwind of the site are primarily residential, with a middle school and several churches located within the area impacted by the smoke plume.

##### 1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

A perimeter site walk was conducted upon arrival. A low-lying area leading to a culvert was receiving the majority of the contaminated run-off water from firefighting operations. Deer Creek runs east of the facility, though a low lying area, retention area, and culvert is currently restricting firefighting run-off from entering Deer Creek. A heavy smoke plume was visible for miles. The plume is impacting downwind receptors in a primarily residential area with several churches and a middle school.

## 2. Current Activities

### 2.1 Operations Section

#### 2.1.1 Narrative

The fire was believed to be under control by the evening of May 24. However, the tire shred piles flared up periodically throughout the night of May 24 and into the morning of May 25. EPA is supporting the response through air monitoring/sampling and water quality monitoring. In addition, EPA provided technical assistance and temperature monitoring on tire shred piles throughout the night of May 24 to assist in the identification and extinguishing of hot spots remaining in the piles.

## 2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

5/24/16:

Water quality monitoring was conducted at 3 locations (upstream, source, and downstream) for impacts, with no adverse readings for Dissolved Oxygen or pH detected. Firefighting run-off was sampled directly using pH paper with no adverse readings detected. An air monitoring network utilizing AreaRAE monitors (O<sub>2</sub>, CO, H<sub>2</sub>S, VOC sensors) was established around the perimeter of the Site. Air sampling utilizing SUMMA canisters is being conducted for both 8 hour and 24 hour sampling periods. Air monitoring was also conducted near the smoldering tire shred piles utilizing an UltraRAE monitor for VOCs, particularly Benzene.

5/25/16:

Water quality monitoring was conducted at 2 locations (downstream and source) for impacts; no adverse reading for Dissolved Oxygen or pH were detected. Air monitoring was conducted around the perimeter of the Site utilizing AreaRAE monitors (O<sub>2</sub>, CO, H<sub>2</sub>S, VOC sensors) and DustTrak particulate monitors. Air sampling utilizing SUMMA canisters was continued for both 8 hour and 24 hours sampling periods. An additional air monitoring station was established to the North of the Site at the Ford Heights Middle School. Additional air monitoring was conducted near the smoldering tire pile shreds utilizing an UltraRAE monitor for VOCs. A thermal imaging camera was provided by the Illinois EPA to the Ford Heights Fire Department to assist with the location of hot spots remaining on the shredded tire pile.

## 2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The owners of both GMI Recycling Services and All American Recycling, which currently own & operate tire recycling collection & recycling services, respectively, at the Site, are assisting in response efforts.

## 2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>
NA					

## 2.2 Planning Section

### 2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

EPA/START will remain on site providing air monitoring/sampling and water quality monitoring in support of response operations. SUMMA canister samples will be sent for laboratory analysis.

#### 2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

EPA/START will continue air monitoring and water quality monitoring activities.

Ford Heights Fire Department (FHFD) will provide 24 hour surveillance of tire fire and address any hot spots/flare-ups.

#### 2.2.1.2 Next Steps

FHFD will identify necessary resources to break tire piles and extinguish the fires in the piles.

When the fire is completely extinguished, EPA will transition oversight of cleanup operations to Illinois EPA.

GMI will identify and contract with an environmental company to characterize and dispose of run-off water from fire suppression.

### 2.2.2 Issues

There are continuing flare-ups in the tire shred piles on the Site.

Identifying and mobilizing necessary resources.

## 2.3 Logistics Section

NA

## 2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

## 2.5 Other Command Staff

### 2.5.1 Safety Officer

OSC Brown is serving in this role.

### 2.5.2 Liaison Officer

OSC Brown is serving in this role.

### 2.5.3 Information Officer

OSC Brown is serving in this role.

## 3. Participating Entities

### 3.1 Unified Command

NA

### **3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

Ford Heights Fire Department

Illinois EPA

Cook County EMA

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System 27

## **4. Personnel On Site**

FIRE SERVICE: 5

EPA: 2

Illinois EPA: 3

START: 2

TOTAL: 12

## **5. Definition of Terms**

No information available at this time.

## **6. Additional sources of information**

### **6.1 Internet location of additional information/report**

<https://www.epaosc.org/fordheightstirefire>

### **6.2 Reporting Schedule**

Next PolRep will be distributed on 5/26/16.

## **7. Situational Reference Materials**

No information available at this time.